Department of Education and Science

Learning out of doors

An HMI survey of outdoor education and short stay residential experience

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This report has been circulated to local education authorities and outdoor education organisations.

Nothing said in this report is to be construed as implying Government commitment to the provision of additional resources.

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1. Introduction

Over a four-year period ending in 1981 HM Inspectors made a series of visits to a 10 per cent sample of local education authority short stay residential centres and to some of the schools which used them regularly.

The LEA centres visited were selected to include a number of broad categories:

residential and day provision

unmanned centres and those with permanent staff

outdoor pursuits centres with a field study bias

centres within and beyond the area of the maintaining LEA

centres within or outside a national park

those providing facilities for primary, middle, secondary or special schools.

Such is the diversity of residential or day centres that it could not be claimed that the sample was representative in the strict statistical sense. In all, visits were made to 48 centres administered by 15 LEAs. Other LEAs made use of and contributed to the overall running costs of some of these centres through consortia arrangements. The survey also included visits to residential centres provided by voluntary and commercial organisations and used by an increasing number of schools.

HMI wish to record their thanks for the help and co-operation of the staff of the schools and centres visited.

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2. Background to the survey

Between 1907 and 1921 Government legislation empowered local education authorities to provide vacation schools, vacation classes and school camps. By 1928 15 LEAs were running school camps and in 1931 camping was introduced as a part of teacher training in one college. The Norwood Report,[1] published in 1943, supported the view that there was 'moral strength' to be derived from involving young people in adventurous land and water based open air tasks.

From 1945 to the 1960s the Board (and subsequently the Ministry) of Education's pamphlets helped to promote interest in organised camping in schools: Education Pamphlet No 11, *Organised camping* and its supplement, *Mobile camping* appeared in 1954. These were replaced by Pamphlet No 41, *Camping and education* in 1961, and by Pamphlet No 58, *Camping*, in 1971. LEAs were encouraged to provide basic camping equipment to put large numbers of pupils under canvas for periods of 5 to 10 days.

In 1963 the Newsom Report, *Half our future*, dealing with pupils of average and less than average ability, drew attention to the particular value that camps, expeditions and residential courses might have for pupils. The report confirmed the conviction of many teachers that these activities provided opportunities for general educational stimulus, personal and social development and closer teacher/pupil relationships, and were of special significance for the disadvantaged and suggested that such experiences should be extended to a much larger number of pupils, especially adolescents. It recommended that:

> *The Ministry and the LEAs should undertake a joint survey to establish accurately the scale on which provision for residential courses of all types is available, how far it is meeting demand and the estimated cost of providing some residential experience for all pupils in the course of their school life, especially for a substantial number of pupils during their final two years at school.*[2]

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[1] Board of Education. Secondary Schools Examination Council. *Curriculum and examinations in secondary schools*. Report of the Secondary Schools Examination Council appointed by the President of the Board of Education in 1941. (Chairman: Sir Cyril Norwood.) HMSO 1943.

[2] The Newsom Report. *Half our future*. Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education. HMSO 1963. Paragraph 156.

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In 1960 only two or three LEA residential centres for outdoor activities existed, but during the next ten years there was a marked increase in the provision so that today nearly 400 day and residential centres have been established by LEAs. In addition, huts, cottages, disused railway stations, village schools and camping facilities have been acquired by individual schools and youth groups. Schools have been making increasing use too of 300 field study bases and over 500 outdoor pursuits centres and a range of residential accommodation provided by voluntary, private or commercial organisations. Some LEAs established residential bases abroad and the increase in educational cruises, ski tours, and the use of day centres and hotels all contributed to this growth in residential experiential education out of school.

The number of pupils involved in residential experiences on a national scale is not known, but HMI visits to 48 LEA centres during the survey indicated that this sample alone provided residential accommodation each year for over 78,000 young people, in addition to teacher/leader training courses. One LEA with seven centres offered courses for over 16,000 pupils annually. The Youth Hostel Association also provides 500,000 'overnight' places annually for school journey parties and recently over 50,000 pupils and 5,000 teachers annually were catered for by one commercial organisation, which provided residential facilities for a period of five weeks. In some of the schools visited, HMI found that children had stayed at four different centres within a two year period. In a school for severely mentally handicapped pupils, five residential opportunities were provided each year.

The rapid growth in provision and use inevitably gave cause for concern about the quality of leadership and safety and the impact of large numbers on the countryside. The National Park Policies Review Committee in the Sandford Report of 1974, on the use of National Parks by schools, recommended that:

> *Head teachers should ensure that the staff accompanying school parties are numerous and experienced enough to maintain control and ensure the safety of their pupils, and that the staff as well as the pupils, are properly informed about the National Park to be visited and about considerate*

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behaviour in the countryside.[3]

It also said:

It is desirable that education authorities and other bodies seeking to set up outdoor centres should avoid over-used areas, and those thinking of doing so in a National Park should consult the Park authorities before committing themselves to particular proposals.[3]

These comments highlight some of the problems arising from the sheer volume and concentration of activities. The need for review suggested in the Newsom Report was echoed in the Sandford Report:

In view of the large sums of public money being invested in outdoor centres in National Parks, the subject should be investigated by the DES in association with the Countryside Commission and the Council for Environmental Education, in order to ascertain whether the best use is being made of resources and what effect the presence of such centres has on rural communities.[3]

An outcome of the Sandford Report was that in 1979 the Countryside Commission appointed a team of consultants from the Dartington Amenity Research Trust (DART) to examine the scale of existing day and residential centre provision promoted by all statutory and voluntary bodies, commercial and private organisations and the Services and to identify the effect of such provision on the rural communities in national parks and other selected areas. Close collaboration between the Inspectorate and the DART team was established and this publication may complement some of the findings of the DART Report, *Groups in the countryside.*[4] HM Inspectorate wish to express their thanks to the Countryside Commission for the use of some of their material in this report.

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[3] The Sandford Report. *National Parks Policies Review Committee Report.* HMSO 1974.

[4] *Groups in the countryside.* Dartington Amenity Trust Report (commissioned by the Countryside Commission – not a published report). Study of the distribution and impact of outdoor groups and activities in England and Wales with particular reference to National Parks and to the centres used by groups. October 1980.

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3. Local education authority centres

3.1 *Accommodation and resources*

Of the 48 centres visited 6 were purpose built and the remainder had been converted from buildings provided for other uses. Included were centres that had formerly served as a small Royal Air Force establishment, a Civil Defence Centre, private houses, village schools and farms, a harbour fort, sports pavilion, fire station, youth hostel, the servants' quarters of a stately home and a castle.

37 centres were within the maintaining local education authority administrative boundaries and 11 were outside. In 3 of the places visited, pupils lived under canvas and 6 of the centres offered day facilities only. 38 of the residential centres visited had accommodation for between 20 and 50 pupils, 5 centres could accommodate more than 60 pupils and the largest centre visited had a capacity of 170. Some centres used tents to augment the permanent accommodation or extend the experience of visiting groups. At camp centres, 4- to 6-berth tents were used, with accommodation for dining, group meetings and storage in marquees on permanent hard standing. The toilet, washing, kitchen and administrative facilities were provided in permanent buildings. One organised camp site had exclusive use of an adjacent village hall during the summer months to provide cooking, dining and toilet facilities as well as social and work areas. 9 of the centres catered mainly for children of primary age, 18 mainly for those of secondary school age and the remainder for both in roughly equal proportions.

Many residential centres were situated in rural areas or on the coast where hills, mountains, woods, rivers and lakes or the sea provided attractive environments in contrast to the urban areas in which many pupils lived. Some were designed and equipped to provide courses in outdoor activities based on the skills of hill walking, climbing, caving, canoeing and sailing. In some instances the premises and resources were specially suited for marine and field studies.

The 3 day centres were located within easy reach of schools so that curricular activities in fieldwork, marine studies, canoeing and sailing activities could be developed on a regular weekly basis. Several tented centres or organised camps were seen. These afforded an economical way of providing residential experience for large parties in the summer and all of them catered for fieldwork and a range

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of outdoor pursuit skills.

With few exceptions, all the manned residential centres visited provided a variety of dormitory accommodation, with toilet and washing facilities, drying rooms, kitchens and dining rooms. Some centres were particularly comfortable and made attractive by the use of curtains, lampshades, pictures and furnishings. The use of colourful adhesive carpeting did much to brighten up bare concrete floors and improved the standards of maintenance and cleanliness. In most cases the provision of heating made it possible for centres to remain in use throughout the year except for a few weeks devoted to maintenance work and staff leave.

The dormitories were sometimes spartan and in some instances provided insufficient space. Two-tiered bunks were most commonly used and often these were in poor condition. A few centres had more robust built-in facilities with sensible storage space for personal belongings. No minimum standards are defined for these short-stay residential centres under Education legislation and there was considerable variation in the standards adopted for the use of dormitory space. LEA centres with a warden and full-time staff usually applied more acceptable standards than unmanned and school owned premises. It is important for those administering centres to consider acceptable standards for circulation space, cupboard and hanging provision, accessibility to toilets (especially at night), washing facilities and fire and safety precautions.

Efficient drying facilities are essential and were well provided in most centres. In a few cases this provision was inadequate to ensure the drying of clothes and equipment overnight, affecting the continuity of the programme and the intensity of the work. In one instance radiators were being used to dry wet clothing.

Dining rooms usually doubled as social areas and in many cases they provided the only work and study spaces available. In centres where physically demanding and time consuming activities in outdoor pursuits or field studies (often involving substantial follow-up work) were a major element, it was not always easy for pupils to achieve good domestic standards. In manned premises the food provided was adequate in quantity, and often of very good quality.

Centres in which academic field studies formed an

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important part of the programme often had simple laboratory and work facilities. These were usually adequate for their purpose and catered for most field study activities. O-level and A-level GCE examination groups often needed to bring equipment from school or college, but this rarely appeared to cause problems.

The quality of the general environment was enhanced in centres by carefully prepared displays, mostly, but not exclusively, where field study was a major component of the work. A number of centres had made good use of the photographic and artistic talent of members of the staff to improve the appearance of rooms by the display of pictures and photographs of pupils involved in activities. Some centres had made collections of artefacts and there were displays of local crafts and industry. Children at one centre had recorded the vivid memories of a retired and articulate Welsh quarryman, and become aware of the conditions of life and work in the old disused and isolated slate quarry barracks high on the nearby mountain. The centre had an excellent display depicting the story of slate and its social and industrial history. Interesting and stimulating indoor displays reflect attitudes of care and order and often provide evidence of high standards being applied to other matters related to safety and work programmes. More could be done in centres to portray the excitement and aesthetic experiences that adventure activities can provide.

In the best centres there were spaces to develop activities outside the formal programme such as an assembly room/drama area, a hut converted into an activity space, facilities for games, a dark room for photography, a library or a quiet room for reading and facilities for pupils to make tea and coffee. Some centres were fortunate in having a room in which both centre and visiting staff could withdraw with a degree of comfort and privacy.

Wardens and staff had shown considerable initiative and enterprise in providing facilities for appropriate activities which helped to develop observational skills and practical outdoor skills both in the formal and informal programme. It was common to find facilities for testing simple map reading and navigational skills in the grounds of many centres. One centre had developed safe areas in the wooded grounds for pupils to practise camp cooking on wood fires, self catering and campcraft techniques, whilst

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others allowed orienteering and basic climbing skills to be practised. Trails had also been established for the study of flora and fauna. One caretaker, an ex-stonemason, had worked with centre staff to develop an indoor rock climbing room for the introduction of basic skills so that time at the rocks could be spent more productively.

There was much evidence of dedicated hard work by individual wardens and members of centre staff to ensure that the buildings and resources were used to the best advantage. Space for extra storage and display had been created and the ingenuity shown in some cases was remarkable. For example, several centres originally established as outdoor pursuits centres had been able to utilise high ceiling space in old school buildings for the storage of basic field study equipment. There was evidence of considerable self help and without it some centres would not have operated at acceptable levels of comfort and safety. LEAs, however, need to reappraise the amount of time that teaching staff are involved in general maintenance work of a routine nature and the effect that this must have on their teaching.

The quality of the accommodation for centre staff varied considerably. The warden was usually provided with living accommodation either in the centre or nearby but it was often unsuitable for family needs. Occasionally, the residential facilities for teaching staff were quite inadequate. In one case a small room, hardly big enough for a bed, had no window to the outside. In a few LEAs, however, it was policy to have non-resident wardens and this placed an obligation upon accompanying staff to make adequate arrangements for supervision, especially at night and in the evenings.

Landrovers or minibuses were essential for the support and safety of parties in the field and generally the standards of maintenance were high. The freedom and flexibility these vehicles provided greatly increased the area to which parties had access and the availability of transport made it possible for resident staff to divert pressure away from the over-used and popular field sites. There was evidence that most groups operated within 30 kilometres of the centre. The rising cost of travel was forcing teachers to develop programmes within the local environment.

Most centres had either received a visit from the local

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fire officer or arrangements were in hand. It is of course essential that all such premises are inspected for fire risk and that recommendations are implemented.

Some schools have acquired their own centres for development as residential bases. Several have taken over old village schools for this purpose. LEAs need to be aware of the development of such centres, especially in relation to cost, intensity of use, the adequacy of toilet and washing facilities and the maintenance of acceptable standards.

3.2 *Equipment* The majority of centres had good stocks of outdoor clothing and equipment appropriate in range and quality for the activities undertaken. Some excellent arrangements were seen for the organisation, checking, storage, recording, downgrading and repair of equipment such as boots, waterproof clothing, camping, climbing and caving gear. The condition and storage of this equipment was markedly better if a designated member of staff was made responsible.

Maps, compasses and charts were generally in good supply, but, not surprisingly, the centres best equipped with reference books were those with an emphasis on field study. Slide and film projectors were available in most centres and frequently used. The provision of books and other teaching resources, including slides of activities undertaken and expedition routes, was unsatisfactory in a number of centres. This added to the problem of ensuring adequate centre-based preparation and follow up for the activities and was associated with the limited availability in a number of centres of accommodation for dining, social and leisure activities and teaching.

It was interesting to find examples of loan systems operating in which centres made equipment available to schools, provided the teacher responsible for outdoor education at the school was competent in its use. This was particularly successful where centres were situated within the LEAs own area and could provide effective support to schools. An increasing number of outdoor pursuit centres was providing basic fieldwork equipment.

Some authorities had well defined policies for providing grants to help schools acquire their own group and individual equipment for expedition work and outdoor

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pursuits but some schools held expensive equipment which was unused because there was no-one on the staff either qualified or willing to take responsibility for it. A few LEAs had excellent central resources of basic equipment such as tents or more specialised items to supplement school-based work. A number of schools had developed the resources and the means to make equipment. This provided the opportunity for pupils to be involved in the design, making, selection and testing of equipment which they then actually used on expeditions.

3.3 *Staffing* 16 of the 48 centres were staffed by a warden working alone. Other centres most commonly had two or three permanent teachers/instructors and one had a teaching staff of 17 full-time specialists in outdoor pursuits. At the time of the visits 18 of the wardens had been in post for over ten years, three for 24 years and many had worked at the same centre for five years or more. Of the total number of 138 full-time teaching staff 10 were not qualified teachers. Those who were qualified had followed specialist initial training courses in a wide variety of subjects, the most common being physical education, geography, biology and for those more recently qualified, outdoor education. In almost every case the teachers possessed appropriate qualifications for the skilled work undertaken or were technically competent because of their considerable experience. Many had taken advantage of the opportunities presented by centre work for improving personal performance and gaining additional qualifications in land and water-based outdoor activities.

It was common to find more men than women on the staff of centres, but there had been an increase in the number of well qualified women teachers as a result of the growth of initial teacher training courses offering specialist options in outdoor and environmental education. Some appointments to centres were being made direct from college and of those members of staff with teaching experience, most had completed fewer than three years. In consequence, few had acquired insights into the problems and possibilities of the schools using the centres. Those appointed direct from initial training were often unaware of the place and potential of centre visits in the school

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curriculum. A greater measure of flexibility in the movement of staff between centres and schools or the youth service would assist their career development, as well as making for better preparatory and follow-up work and a more effective use of centres.

One local education authority with a policy for seconding teachers for a fixed term of five years, had found problems in placing them in schools after this length of time. Other authorities had adopted a more flexible approach by seconding some teachers for a limited period of one year and others for longer periods. This allowed those returning to schools after one year's intensive work in a centre to carry back valuable experience to their school-based work.

Staffing levels usually met the nationally accepted requirements of the activities undertaken. The most favourable staffing levels were found in the centres specialising in outdoor pursuits where permanent sta were supplemented by visiting teachers or by voluntai instructors. It was the practice at some centres for the res dential staff to be on duty for a period equivalent to th normal school day with the weekly addition of an evening or a weekend duty or an overnight camping expedition. At some centres the evening activities were the responsibility of the visiting staff only and, whilst this provided opportunities for good teacher-pupil relationships to be developed, it placed a heavy burden on visiting teachers. The problem was seen at its worst in those situations where schools sent only one teacher with over 30 pupils. At other centres the responsibility for the evening and night periods was shared between visiting and residential staff, the latter usually well able to provide activities based on the special features of the centre and its environment. It had been the policy of one LEA that teachers should not be asked to accompany parties, pupils being recruited for courses from a number of schools, but the policy was being modified now that the role of teachers was understood.

In one centre the staffing of each successive course was planned individually by pooling the resources and expertise of both centre and visiting staff. Teachers were expected, wherever possible, to participate fully alongside centre staff in the teaching; similarly, evening follow up activities were fully shared between both groups. Visiting

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teachers who had previous knowledge of the centre and were familiar with the terrain in which most of the activities took place were able to plan and supervise expedition work as well as organise field studies in their academic specialism. The relationship between the work undertaken by centre and visiting staff should be made clear and agreed prior to the visit.

During the early growth of centres it was the normal practice to find specialist centre staff in charge of most activities and a few centres were still functioning in this way. It was more common to find that teachers were encouraged to become involved in the activities. In one LEA with 230 schools of all types 2,220 teachers had been directly involved in a range of residential and outdoor education activities, 220 teachers had gained certificates of national currency in sailing, canoeing, mountaineering and skiing and over 500 had undergone a minimum course of training in a particular activity, which the LEA accepted as appropriate to the level required. In addition, teacher associations covering all the physical activities and subject areas had been formed. These associations provided a basis for the discussion of curricular matters and support courses for teachers.

There were examples of centres receiving ancillary and sometimes expert help. Assistance was provided by parents, caretakers, school meals staff, students in training and, in one LEA centre, young men and women leaders from the Youth and Community Service. Some centres enjoyed good links with colleges involved in both initial and in-service training of teachers in outdoor education. This provided students with valuable first-hand knowledge of centre work as an important aspect of school experience.

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4. Range and variety of work seen in centres

4.1 *Field studies*

Of the 48 centres, 33 provided field study courses and of these 12 tended to specialise in environmental study of various kinds; the majority of this work was with older primary pupils, but a growing number of courses was concerned with older secondary pupils, especially those preparing for examinations at 16-plus and at A-level in subjects such as geography and biology. The recent emphasis on field study in A-level, O-level and CSE syllabuses, in these and other subjects, has caused a considerable growth in the demand for centre time, and even some of the centres primarily geared to outdoor pursuits had devoted part of their programmes to such courses. Where centres were used by groups primarily for academic and creative studies the residential experience was normally viewed as an integral part of a course in geography, biology, art or more rarely geology or history. These studies benefit from a clear focus of objectives, linked with an understanding of certain principles which are taught in the main syllabus, to which the activities of different days are geared. Thus in one centre, a group of A-level geography students was investigating land use in a National Park, the impact of tourism in the area, the exploitation of the area for wate supply and forestry, conservation problems and undertak ing village studies; each of these aspects had been carefull· researched by the teacher in charge, who had prepared learning materials and resources. Each study produced a considerable volume of further material which could be followed up at school. From conversation with the pupils, there was no doubt that geographical understanding had been greatly enhanced, especially in the necessary, but often elusive skill of applying theoretical models and principles in actual situations.

The field work of pupils from primary schools, middle schools and the early years of secondary schools in environmental studies varied enormously. With gifted teachers and experienced centre staff field studies inspired remarkable motivation amongst children which often led to work of high quality. For example, with a group of first year secondary school pupils at one centre the head of the geography department had set out to involve them in three different kinds of writing which he termed descriptive,

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creative and analytical. These types of work were achieved during evening follow up respectively of studies of glacial erosion, a local castle (pupils were asked to imagine the experience and emotions of attackers and defenders) and a nearby sandspit. The last activity produced some particularly interesting work; a simple hypothesis relating to the supposed origin of the spit was investigated through the collection and analysis of data relating to the size and location of pebbles. The pupils had been stimulated to discuss the findings and their implications, and to record them in the form of simple tables, an explanatory sketch map, and two or three paragraphs of writing. In contrast, some work seen was trivial, especially where teachers failed to recognise the need for careful planning and preparation and where pupils arrived in an exciting new environment without the training in observational skills and elementary procedures which might easily have been developed at school or the local environment. It was equally wasteful if these experiences were not developed and followed up back at school. Much more should be done to exploit the complementary nature of the work of centres and schools. In all the work seen it was clear that it is necessary, if difficult, to achieve a balance between guiding pupils to see and understand what they are looking at and allowing them time to form their own perceptions and ask their own questions. High quality teaching will always combine giving guidance to pupils about the environment under study with the encouragement of pupils to put forward their own ideas which may add new insights to the work.

4.2 *Outdoor pursuits*

Outdoor pursuits, including mountain or hill walking, rock climbing, canoeing, sailing, caving and camping, were offered at 33 of the centres visited, 14 of which stated that their programmes were devoted entirely to such activities. In programmes concentrating mainly upon outdoor pursuits, courses usually lasted for five or seven days. Commonly pupils worked in small groups following different activities for about one day each, often linked together in an arrangement which allowed everyone a try at each activity. Although it was possible to allow pupils to return to one of the activities sampled earlier, and to make further progress, the time was usually too short for most

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pupils to achieve any degree of competence. It was possible in the longer courses to include an expedition with an overnight camp or stay in a mountain hut. In many cases the short residential programmes were isolated experiences and, although they presented opportunities for pupils to achieve some success, expectations were low and the educational value was limited.

In 36 of the centres the majority of the outdoor activity courses were stated to be designed for each school, and prior consultation between schools and centres took place in 18. In 5 centres nearly all the courses were 'packages' prepared by the centre without prior consultation and preparation with the school and staff involved. In these centres there was evidence of a mismatch between objectives and achievement. In most cases, however, these adventure courses were designed to provide opportunities for personal and social development and to encourage new leisure interests. These outcomes are very difficult, if not impossible, to measure, and the activities were not easy to evaluate. The emphasis, however, upon personal development, based on a successful response to challenge and a growing and hard won competence, encompassed an acceptable group of educational aims.

The vast majority of activities provided were competently and safely taught and in many instances, a genuine sense of adventure resulted. In one centre, for example, the sailing activities were aimed at getting young people in control of craft as early as possible. Although the wind conditions were gusty at the time and some capsizes occurred, these were quickly righted and the pupils performed well, exhibiting growing confidence as the day wore on. It was also clear from their subsequent conversation and general demeanour that pupils had emerged from the day's experience with a real sense of achievement and heightened morale. This reflected a careful selection of dinghies and equipment appropriate for the conditions and an approach in which guided progression from full control by the teacher to independence of action by the pupils concerned was achieved.

At another centre a day's caving was designed to encourage self reliance and to develop social skills through cooperation and interdependence. Pupils were given turns leading the party through various cave sections using a

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map of the caverns to be explored. Cooperation was essential when the advice of the leader concerning movement through a constricted space was passed back, and when various members had to be pushed or pulled through some of the most difficult passages. The experience of utter darkness was also new for the pupils. Although one or two pupils were apprehensive at times, the situation was sensitively handled and there was unanimous agreement that the experience had been worthwhile. Although it was clear that the pupils considered this a most daring activity, the party was never more than a few yards from several easy escape routes well known to the leader. Later, at the centre, the building was abuzz with conversation as the pupils recounted the day's experiences.

The conduct of hill and mountain walking expeditions ranked amongst the most disappointing of the activities observed. At the end of the first day of a three day expedition some secondary school boys, subdued and tired, appeared to be too young and immature for the course they followed, not least because the weather had been bad ever since their arrival. The mountain hut itself was rough and dirty, the kitchen scruffy and chaotic, the main room dirty but effectively warmed by a coke stove in the middle. The boys had walked only a few miles and ascended only a small hill, but the cumulative effect of what they thought they had done seemed to have knocked the stuffing out of them. One boy was writing his diary and another reading a book, but most were exhausted. Only one or two had done any sort of walking previously. The boys had been drawn from about 100 in the third year of a secondary school with a full ability range. The experience was unrelated to anything they had done before, or might necessarily do again. Older and more experienced boys with previous training and preparation would have gained a great deal more from this experience.

In several centres the practice of involving pupils in route planning and debriefing them on return was almost unknown, and sometimes it was not even the custom to issue pupils with map and compass, let alone to involve them in navigating and making important decisions. Valuable opportunities were missed for using the expedition as a means of familiarising pupils with the area in which they were working and living – its landscapes, wild life, farm-

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ing methods, settlements, way of life and its peculiar problems and culture. Much more could be achieved through the integration of outdoor expeditions which follow up work at the centre using films, slides, pictures, aerial photographs, specimens and exhibits, tapes and local maps. In other cases the work seen was elementary. For example, basic map reading which could have been taught in the locality of the school was seen as part of the programme for groups visiting some centres located in areas highly suited to the practice of map reading skills at an advanced level, and which provided opportunities for work not possible at or near the school. In one instance some sixth form girls were unable to read and interpret a map with sufficient accuracy to find a reference point in a market town very similar to their own home town. They had made a journey of over 100 miles to do a town study for which they had not been adequately prepared. Unplanned visits to centres, without preparation and purpose are a waste of time and money.

It was encouraging to find that some centres provided opportunities for interested and motivated pupils to retur at weekends or during holidays to undertake further an more varied work, which occasionally led to major expeditions at home and abroad. Competent and responsible pupils were occasionally allowed to use centre equipment, their independent activities and expeditions carefully monitored.

In one authority where there were well established teacher associations for mountaineering, canoeing, sailing and skiing, young people were encouraged to attend regular training programmes in order to extend their experience and develop their natural ability in a wide range of activities. There was evidence to indicate, however, that a disappointingly small number of pupils had opportunities to take their skills beyond the introductory level.

4.3 *Community links*

A further set of problems, associated with programmes involving daily changes of activity, lay in the relationship of the centre to the locality and the community in which it was situated. Challenging land and water based activities sometimes involved journeys from centres of at least 45 minutes in each direction while the immediate environs

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were virtually ignored. Pupils should be helped to come to a sympathetic understanding of the nature, problems, the way of life of the areas in which they are working; this is very difficult to achieve when the venue shifts daily, and when studies of local traditions and settlements occupy a minor and incidental place in the programme.

In many centres there was an increasing concern for and involvement with the local community. Ways of achieving contacts varied, but where schools and LEAs were situated a long distance from unmanned centres there were quite formidable problems in maintaining adequate links with local people. One centre within a castle provided an annual gathering for the estate workers and other local people. Another centre allocated one day out of each ten day course as a 'giving back' day to both centre and local community. Pupils worked in task force groups which were involved in clearing ground, contributing to the stock of sawn logs which some pupils helped distribute to elderly people in the nearby village, working with staff on repair or in self help schemes within the centre. Another centre had such a relationship with neighbouring farmers that groups were occasionally called upon to help with urgent tasks. These methods of involving youngsters in the community not only provided worthwhile opportunities for social education, but helped to inform them about the local people, their lives and work and helped to develop attitudes of care and conservation. Not least in the area of centre and community links was the fact that many centres provided jobs for local people, often with working hours that could be varied and flexible. The majority of catering, cleaning, caretaking and maintenance staff were local people often living in an area where employment was difficult to find and who provided a fund of local knowledge and contacts to the benefit of the centre.

4.4 *Social aims* The attainment of objectives related to pupils' social development was frequently placed high in the list of aims for centres. During meals and relaxation periods at centres, there was often an impressive atmosphere of fellowship, involving both teachers and pupils, as shared experiences and achievements were recounted and exchanged. Pupils frequently volunteered the view that these experiences had

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shown up their teachers in a much more humane and approachable light. One ten year old girl commented how much nicer her teacher was than she seemed at school. She even wore red pyjamas, but what was more surprising, they had 'Superman' printed across the front. Teachers, in turn, were able to point to the achievements of certain pupils which indicated a degree of application never approached during normal school work. While much that was observed during the survey, in both outdoor and residential situations, tended to support these assertions, few attempts to devise a method of recording and evaluating pupils' social experiences and developments were seen. A greater extension of some kind of appraisal seems desirable.

4.5 *Liaison between schools and centres*

The quality of communication between centre and schoc matters. Where the centres were located within the LE. area or nearby, communication was often positive an effective. Exchange visits before the projected visit were easier and curricular consultation between head teachers and the staff of centres could take place. Inevitably, where centres were located at considerable distances from the schools communication was less effective. The best practice included a clearly defined chain of responsibility between centres and the office of the chief education officer. A designated officer, who might be a specialist adviser, had the responsibility for arranging meetings of the interested parties with a view to making the best use of the centres and centre staff. In at least two cases advisory committees had been set up. The membership included officers, wardens, centre staff and representatives of user groups such as head teachers, youth leaders and teachers. Communication was helped if centres operated in-service training programmes for teachers. Generally these courses reflected the concern of most LEAs with safety, codes of conduct and the calculated risks of working with pupils in adventurous activities.

It was encouraging to see that positive steps had been taken recently to help teachers and centre staff to develop a clearer understanding of the philosophy of outdoor education; its aims, objectives and the place of the residential centre visit in the main stream of the curriculum. It appears

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likely that the growing acceptance of the educational merit of outdoor and residential experience will encourage school staff to plan their own programmes and use the resources at centres to extend work already well established as part of the curriculum.

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5. Centres made available by voluntary and private organisations

For many years schools have made extensive use of a wide range of the outdoor and residential provision of voluntary and commercial organisations. The survey included visits to 16 centres run by four organisations of national standing. Many of the centres were initially developed to cater for young people in the post-school age group. The change in policy to cater for school groups reflects the significant growth of these activities in the curriculum.

In the last 15 years the Youth Hostel Association has experienced a rise of 260 per cent in the use of hostels by school parties. To cater for educational needs it has provided field study facilities at 26 hostels and only in 1981 was there any fall in the demand for places. The total overnight stays in 1981 at these specially equipped centres w 237,788 of which 85,301 involved school parties. Th national organisation has an education officer and commi tee responsible for the promotion of educational activitie through field officer schemes and a policy of in-service education for teachers and party leaders. The Association's objectives are

> *to help all, especially young people of limited means, to a greater knowledge, love and care of the countryside, particularly by providing simple residential accommodation for them . . . and to promote their health, rest and education.*

In some cases special arrangements have been made with local education authorities and schools to have exclusive mid-week use of certain hostels. For example, in one large comprehensive school all the second year pupils (160–plus) visited a hostel in groups of 28 with four staff within a period of five to six weeks. Over the years, teachers had developed resource material and field visits related to studies in history, biology, geography and had successfully combined this programme with a range of map reading, orienteering and hill walking skills.

Another comprehensive school serving a large industrial city considered that there were considerable benefits to be gained from taking groups of children to new and attractive surroundings. This was achieved on an annual basis by using the residential facilities provided for school groups at a hostel situated in a magnificent coastal setting

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in the south west. These outdoor/residential weeks were planned by school staff. It was intended that the social and residential experiences would help in developing qualities of confidence and cooperation and, for many of the less academic pupils, that these would influence their motivation, learning and academic skills. The pupils responded well to the enthusiasm and commitment shown by their teachers and attitudes to school as well as the quality of work improved.

A moderate expansion of organised school use of these hostelling facilities is possible and should be encouraged by improved publicity and training for party leaders.

HMI also visited by invitation centres of the Outward Bound Trust and the YMCA, voluntary organisations with long traditions of running residential/adventure courses for post-school youngsters. In 1972 two of these centres introduced special adventure courses for school groups (14 to 16 years) in which young people were encouraged

to master new skills and through a range of group activities and expeditions in the wild countryside develop personal qualities, effective relationships and respect for natural life.

These centres were staffed by experienced specialists assisted by temporary instructors and they offered a programme with an emphasis on adventurous outdoor activities with a significant environmental content in many of the courses. Wardens and staff of these centres attached considerable importance to a range of experiences which were challenging, action centred, enjoyable and different from those offered by a conventional programme in schools. Authorities with few resources for outdoor education supported by selecting pupils who might benefit from these experiences.

The demand for short-stay outdoor/residential facilities by schools is also reflected in the growth of commercial resources. A holiday camp chain provides special adventure programmes and education weeks catering for about 50,000 pupils annually. The centres make a large team of specialist instructors available and schools are encouraged to use this support in devising their own programmes. Not surprisingly, the way schools used these 'packaged programmes' varied enormously. Some teachers relied heavily on the prepared course whereas others made a considered

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selection of the recreational activities and instruction available for their evening sessions after they had followed a programme of school designed outdoor and field visits during the day. When teachers planned their own programmes it was clearly evident that preparation was more effective and that follow up work on return to school was more closely related to the curriculum. The fact that teachers and children shared the same experiences had contributed to the way learning was achieved and the quality of teacher/pupil relationships.

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6. Range and variety of work seen in schools

6.1 *Staffing* The 100 schools visited included all types and sizes, some with nearly 2,000 pupils on roll. In a few all the staff were involved in aspects of outdoor and residential education, but in the majority there was a positive and regular contribution from a significant number of teachers, especially in the extra curricular programme. In about half the schools teachers held qualifications of national currency in mountain and hill walking. About 25 per cent of the teachers had obtained national qualifications in canoeing, approximately 12 per cent in sailing and nearly 8 per cent were qualified as ski party leaders.

Few teachers took on a commitment to outdoor education without an enthusiasm for the work and a conviction as to its value. Head teachers committed to promoting outdoor education often made appointments with the needs of the programme in mind, and the residential field trips were occasions when the skills of non-teachers were incorporated into the strengths of the team. Parents, welfare assistants, police cadets and students were all recruited to assist teachers on field trips and to undertake duties which allowed the qualified staff to achieve the staff/pupil ratio necessary when working outdoors.

6.2 *Resources* In the great majority of schools there were few problems of finance in mounting residential experiences for school parties. Throughout the period of financial restraint in other educational spending LEAs continued to give support to outdoor education programmes. Financial help was often available for the child in special need, usually identified by being in receipt of free school meals, and parents were frequently reported to be willing to contribute towards the cost of visits to outdoor education centres. Sometimes a school would mount fund-raising events to keep programmes going and to reduce the cost to pupils. One headmaster emphasised that outdoor education was expensive in terms of time, staffing, transport, equipment and in-service training commitments, but he regarded the investment as justified by the improved relationships that resulted and the reinforcement it provided

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for classroom work.

The rising cost of equipment, both personal and for groups, was a matter of concern because staff were aware that it would be unwise to send parties out inadequately equipped or with poor quality personal clothing. Where equipment was available from central stores good standards were established and proper attention given to storage and maintenance. Some schools joined forces to purchase equipment on a consortia basis, while others concentrated their efforts on supplementing what was available from the local authority equipment store. Where pupils were left to provide their own personal clothing there was sometimes concern about the quality of footwear and outer garments. Some enterprising schools made their own waterproof and windproof overtrousers and anoraks using simple templates and high quality material.

All the schools made use of LEA centres but many added to their outdoor programme by using other short stay residential facilities. Some ran their own standing camps and four owned their own centres. Only six schools did not possess some form of group transport; some had two vehicles and almost all made use of hired transport at some time each year. Some head teachers had experienced problems with insurance, legislation, or the maintenance of school owned vehicles but had arrived at sensible policies with the support of their authority to meet the requirements of safety and the law. The availability of transport had a significant impact on the scope and variety of out of school activities.

6.3 *Planning and organisation*

Schools varied greatly in their approach to outdoor education. Very few had well defined aims and objectives in written form but many were able to articulate their intentions clearly. Some objectives were related to examination work but most emphasised the contribution that outdoor and residential experiences made to the social and personal development of pupils.

Difficulties reported were often to do with structuring outdoor education within the timetable. Arranging for complete groups of pupils with similar curriculum needs to be away together, releasing staff with the right experience, covering the classes remaining at school, timetabling

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a few children who opted out, achieving the desired pupil/teacher ratios – these were some of the difficulties mentioned. It was surprising nonetheless how often head teachers reported no organisational problems that could not be overcome. Self catering arrangements at some centres presented problems for the less experienced teachers. Parents were recruited to help in these circumstances but the quality of the experience was often seen to be superior if regular help with catering was available at centres, especially for primary groups. It was a disadvantage if teaching staff had to return early from field work in order to prepare a meal.

Most schools made plans well ahead of a visit and parents were given the chance to contribute towards the costs over a period of up to 12 months. The most difficult problem concerned the selection of the group for the visit. In one large comprehensive school, for example, only 24 pupils out of about 90 following the experimental joint 16-plus syllabus in geography (which included a substantial compulsory field project) were able to attend. In this case the school offered these places to pupils producing the highest gradings in the Christmas terminal examination. Although any method of selection was bound to be unsatisfactory, this one seemed particularly inappropriate. Visits planned for complete class groups were the most successful.

Where pupils were selected at random, sometimes from more than one year group, the objectives tended to be vague, preparation and continuity were limited and activities tended to become sample experiences with little relevance to the pupils' curriculum.

6.4 *The work of schools*

Many of the primary schools visited the centres as class units with their own teachers. The quality of the work and the involvement of the children was usually associated with the amount of planning and the level of commitment and enthusiasm of the individual teachers concerned. There was sometimes a lack of any overall scheme or sequence. It was clear that in larger primary schools much more could be done through curriculum appraisal and leadership to develop a cooperative approach to outdoor education. Sometimes successive days included beach, farm, village

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and hedgerow studies so that there was little conceptual progression. A work programme on a farm, for example, included descriptions of farm buildings, the number and uses of fields, machinery observed and animals kept, but there was no discussion of the variations of farming patterns in terms of topography and remoteness (against which the particular circumstances of the farm could be compared) either before, during or after the visit.

There were other instances, however, of very good work. For example, in one school, after booking a residential centre 12 months ahead, the three teachers involved started to plan the lines of enquiry the children might pursue and a suitable itinerary. Within two months of the visit letters were sent to all the prospective sites to confirm dates and time of visits. Requests were also sent to the School Library Service and School Museum Service for a wide range of resource material. Several weeks ahead of the journey all the children of the two classes were presented with a questionnaire to prepare them for the visit and the follow up work on return. After the visit it was not surprising to see the excellent quality and quantity of work being mounted round the walls of the classrooms, including writings, paintings, charcoal and pastel drawings, collages and models. The teachers claimed afterwards that children worked in groups better than before and were more aware and appreciative of other children's learning difficulties.

In one middle school the outdoor education programme included not only field studies, but also a considerable element of camping, canoeing, skiing and sailing. Out of a total of 404 pupils (9 to 13 years) nearly 200 enjoyed residential centre experiences annually and almost 250 were involved in outdoor activities both in and out of school time. Ten pupils had taken the British Canoe Union Elementary Certificate and others made regular visits to the local dry ski slope and took part in the LEA ski programme abroad. Nearly half the staff were involved in the programme and they were supported by an LEA in-service programme which included training in most of the activities.

In one large comprehensive school, over 300 out of 1,500 pupils took part in some form of residential course annually. The school used LEA residential provision and

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also organised an annual standing camp for 120 pupils (some 20 miles from the school) and a first year course in the Lake District based on a youth hostel. This provision was sufficient to enable each pupil to have a residential experience at some time during his school career.

In another school, the outdoor pursuits department was an integral part of the social education faculty. Two members of staff were responsible for outdoor education with others timetabled to assist. First year pupils went hill walking. Visits in the second year developed and extended map reading and observational skills related to natural history and environmental studies. In the third year small groups undertook camping expeditions in more remote areas involving hill walking, orienteering and other basic outdoor activities. As part of the overall social education provision all fourth year pupils were involved in outdoor education being timetabled for a minimum of two lessons (105 minutes) per week for blocks of about 12 weeks). The 50 or so pupils at any one time were divided into five groups for rock climbing, canoeing, camp craft or orienteering. The fifth and sixth form pupils combined for a recreational afternoon each week. The social education and craft faculties combined with the physical education department to provide some 15 different activities. Canoeing and caving activities were taught by specialist staff and it was normally possible to extend these activities beyond the normal school day. This curricular activity was supported by a great deal of extra-curricular outdoor education.

Outdoor education in another school situated at the foot of a huge slag heap was seen by the head as an attempt to compensate pupils for the 'compulsory imprisonment' in an unprepossessing and inadequate school building. A fleet of minibuses supported this compensatory education programme and took pupils away on annual camps both at home and abroad to enjoy a range of activities including canoeing, sailing and rock climbing. In addition there was a clear commitment to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme and to extensive involvement in conservation projects for improving the industrial spoil heaps and waste areas which scarred the local area. A significant annual feature involved all eight forms in the first year. Two groups each week, over a period of one month, stayed for an adventure week with their new form tutors in a residen-

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tial centre during the early part of the term after they had arrived from their small primary schools.

Many other secondary schools had developed similar induction courses using outdoor/residential centres and standing camps for all first year pupils with the intention of developing confidence and good pupil/teacher relationships, especially when pupils were drawn from small rural contributory primary schools. The principal of an 11 to 18 school with a community wing offered all first year children and tutors the chance to take part in short stay residential activities. Simple residential facilities were available within ten miles of school at a very low cost and additional staff attended on a day basis to support resident teachers.

Short stay residential experiences were commonly offered to fourth, fifth and sixth year pupils in order to undertake field studies. These groups tended to carry out examination based work and the field studies combined elements derived from other disciplines (biology, geography and history) requiring planned preparation and follow up. There were good examples of schools which had developed an effective synthesis of the skills of moving safely and living in comfort with aspects of scientific exploration in more challenging and remote areas.

A project in one comprehensive school involved all the intending sixth form pupils and teachers at the end of the summer term. With four days in residence to discuss A level courses, the intention was to develop good relationships through a practical programme in which teachers and pupils took part in climbing, canoeing and sailing activities. The course was of considerable social value and it resulted in a quick and enthusiastic start to the sixth form course in September.

Successful outdoor education in secondary schools showed a clear sense of purpose and progression in the use of the residential period. Many departments were involved in the planning. Continuity of staff involvement ensured that the social benefits of teachers and pupils planning menus and activities, living and working together, sharing chores and generally learning to adjust to each other, was of lasting value once the group had returned to school. The same criteria for success applied to disadvantaged pupils and those with special needs, including handicapped pupils, maladjusted children, young people at risk, those

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on Intermediate Treatment schemes and the young unemployed on MSC programmes. Often the objectives were intended to stimulate learning through direct forms of experience and to assist personal and social development.

6.5 *LEA policies* Curricular links in any subject between primary and secondary schools are not always easily achieved; sometimes the place of residential experiences was similarly not coordinated between the phases of education and evaluation was not tackled systematically. This pointed to a need for an authority policy about the place of outdoor education and about the allocation of time at residential centres. Time was the ingredient most often identified as being in short supply. Few authorities could cope with the demand at their own centres and there was increasing use of youth hostels, standing camps and commercially run centres.

Policy now needs to be more firmly based on some assessment of what has so far been achieved. After a period of 15 years or so in which rapid expansion has taken place, the period of consolidation now begun gives the chance for measured appraisal of outdoor education and residential experience. Evaluation, so far largely a matter of intuition and subjective impression, needs to be undertaken more methodically so that, in a time of financial restraint, priorities may be drawn up for the allocation of resources and the use of time.

Following the local government boundary changes in 1974 the future of a number of centres depended on cooperative arrangements between LEAs. In two cases continuity has been assured through the appointment of specialist advisers, who became accountable to all the authorities within the consortia. Several newly formed local authorities which found themselves responsible for residential centres lacked the necessary policies, professional support and expertise. Since then the majority of them have appointed a designated officer responsible for outdoor education and in the last few years these specialists have formed a National Panel of Advisers in Outdoor Education. Perhaps the most important and persistent weakness in the operation of centres is that despite much sympathetic support for their work by head teachers, teachers, pupils and parents, in general only a few

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authorities have attempted to articulate clearly what role is perceived for them in overall educational development in the area. Much more could be achieved by further constructive thought on policy and philosophy, which would carry implications for centre programmes and staffing, the role of the visiting teacher, in-service training, the requirement for staff qualifications, methods for the allocation of centre time to schools and the servicing function of centres in support of school based activities.

None of the LEAs had developed policies in respect of school-owned centres. In a few cases some were unaware that schools had their own centres. Several authorities had allowed old and disused rural primary schools to be taken over by large secondary schools, but apart from their responsibilities for the maintenance of the fabric, the schools were not accountable for their use and development.

Some local education authorities have prepared publications on regulations and advice to schools relating to the undertaking of hazardous outdoor pursuits. These policy documents offer guidelines on acceptable procedures in various risk activities, qualifications and experienc required by teachers, insurance provision, the respon sibilities of the head teacher in the approval of hazardous activities in schools and clubs and the notification system to be adopted when certain categories of outdoor pursuits are contemplated. The various national governing body awards figure prominently and sometimes they have tended to dominate these arrangements. The general principle of adjusting requirements to the need of a particular area (land or water) and of providing an appropriately geared and progressive in-service programme seems a sensible alternative to an inflexible reliance on national qualifications. Arrangements for staff development which provide not only training in technical competence, but also continuous assessment and experience should be encouraged. Inflexible requirements, not allowing sensible interpretation and which in effect curtail work that is taking place or produce an unbalanced emphasis on safety, have generally been replaced by screening systems which validate the qualifications of teachers and take into account their experience and known competence.

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7. Review of good practice: examples

Example 1

Primary school, 270 pupils on roll, in rural county.

The school occupies a building dating back to 1853. Five mobile classrooms clustered around the original building provide evidence of the recent growth of a dormitory village outside a market town. The headmaster gives a strong lead by encouraging class teachers to use fieldwork undertaken at residential centres to support classroom activity. His deputy, a member of a moorland rescue team, is no less enthusiastic. Objectives are seen as the use of first hand experiences to support academic growth, the appreciation of aesthetic experiences and the development of sound attitudes towards each other and the environment. There is much evidence of the approach around the school. Some fine pottery is well displayed and the school in general reflects a concern for the visual and natural environment. Gardens are well tended and flowers are grown about the school. The school has its own wood nearby which pupils are developing as a nature reserve.

Complete classes of pupils take part in fieldwork, mainly those in the third and fourth years of the junior stage, although all class journeys, day visits and use of the immediate area are seen as a preparation for the more sophisticated studies undertaken in the final year before transfer to secondary school. For day excursions classes visit the beach, the zoo, the centre for marine biology, the cathedral, Guildhall, the docks, museums and villages contrasting the old and the new. Work is supported by films and the authority's library service, resources centre, museum education service, centre wardens and advisers.

The culmination of much classroom work is the one week residential course in the summer term at the authority's moorland centre. Class teachers go with their own class groups accompanied by one other teacher, an ancillary helper and her husband and three students from the city art college who undertake a photographic and display project based on the work of the children. The headteacher visits the group on one day and stays overnight and, for the rest, teaches the class for which the teacher is absent.

The centre has no teaching staff other than the warden who is non-resident. The school plans its own programme

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but over the years a considerable knowledge of the area and the opportunities it provides has been built up. The staff take all they need by way of equipment and resource material and great use is made of cassette tape recorders purchased out of school funds to record impressions, interviews and the sounds of the countryside. Prior to the expedition a booklet is prepared by each child on 'Safety on the Moor' and the class undertakes a study of weather forms. When the pupils return to school the task of collation, recording, interpretation, elaboration and presentation of the material collected begins. Much will be illustrated through art and individual interpretations of events and scenes on the moor are completed using a range of media. A miscellany of drama, music and poetry is prepared together with a tape/slide sequence recording the events of the week for presentation to parents at the end of June.

The school clearly has the support of its parents although many are by no means affluent. The Chairman of Governors, the Rector of the local Church is no less involved and supports the work in many ways.

Perhaps the main reason for the high standards achieved by this school is the presence of a clear philosophy which ensures continuity and the progressive build-up of skills and attitudes. Children are known as individual personalities and the detailed records of attainment and needs which are passed on to secondary school are impressive. The headteacher believes that the children gain a deeper understanding of themselves and each other through sharing and taking responsibility for planning, cooking and cleaning at the centre and the purpose given to classroom activity both before and afterwards leads to work of good quality and a pride in achievement.

Example 2

School for children with severe learning difficulties (day, ESN(S) 2 to 16, mixed) in large city.

The programme takes advantage of opportunities that arise from the natural environment and is supported by much help from volunteers. The activities include pony riding, a night walk with the local moorland rescue group, observation of the night sky on the open moors, playing in canoes in shallow water and walking expeditions on open

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and wild moorland in a variety of weather conditions. These experiences may well help to develop desirable personal qualities though it is recognised that there is often no realistic expectation of further development of these recreational activities in later life for many of these young people.

Some aims of the short stay residential experiences offered are specific, structured and related directly to skills and activities which it is hoped will be developed in adulthood such as the ability to get up and dress in the morning without being cajoled, the ability to plan, choose, buy and cook meals without adult intervention and to dress appropriately for different weather conditions.

School based in-service training for the teachers is considered essential and the leadership provided is sensitive and tolerant of conflicting styles. At meal times in the centre some teachers sit with pupils to talk with them and to establish expectations about attitudes and behaviour; other teachers tend to allow groups a greater degree of independence. Teachers in charge of residential trips are selected for their experience and there is a policy of including new teachers so that informal school based training is continually in progress. The school is fortunate in having staff with national qualifications in mountain craft and canoeing and these key people work with other staff to develop a growing reservoir of experience. Many of these have now been approved within the local authority scheme which validates the competence of teachers to operate in certain activities and conditions.

A progressive programme for pupils is achieved in two ways – by increasing the length of the visit, and by raising the demands made on the children while they are away. Thus, a week away from home, with teachers cooking the meals and directing the day's activities is regarded as less demanding than two nights away when the children are given money and must shop and cook for themselves, with only discreet supervision from adults.

Juniors are offered one week in the summer term at a simple self catering centre. Seniors are taken three times a year to a similar centre, but with a narrower range of aims to do with self-management skills such as shopping, dressing, menu planning, cooking and taking part in a self directed day with minimal adult guidance. In September,

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the more able children go to a centre for a week, where the emphasis is on outdoor activities. While independence and self help are practised, the adults play a more positive role in seeing that meals are on time so that pupils can be out completing the planned programme of walks and other activities. There is a safe stretch of river where it is possible to introduce everyone to canoeing. The water is shallow enough for a helper to stand and hold a boat so that even non swimmers can take part without risk.

Most of the activities are preceded by earlier stages which take place nearer school or in the classroom. Dressing skills begin in the nursery class, continue in conjunction with activities such as swimming, and are used realistically when preparing for walks near the school or weekly outings in the school bus. Cooking and shopping are taught in small progressive steps using classroom kitchens and local shops. When senior children shop and cook for themselves for two days, they have several years of relevant experience to support them.

On principle, only a little equipment is owned by the school. Almost anything can be borrowed or hired, and is considered highly uneconomic to buy things that a used only once or twice a year. A large supply of the be: nylon oversuits is available for water based activities, sufficient to protect 15 children of varied sizes. This collection has been built up over several years and one or two suits are replaced annually. Also there are 15 rucksacks as well as half a dozen sleeping bags and a gas cooker for picnics.

It is common for members of staff to observe different but significant changes in the behaviour of some children. The head teacher believes that during residential visits the sensibilities of staff as well as children are heightened so that pupils become more efficient learners, and staff become more effective teachers.

Example 3

Large 11 to 18 comprehensive school of 1,200 pupils serving a suburban area of a large northern city.

The programme of this school reflects two important beliefs; one, the value of field study to reinforce learning; and two, the value of shared experience as a means of achieving personal and social development. The pro-

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gramme is ambitious, but well established, and rests on considerable staff commitment and parental support. The history, geography and biology departments and the faculty of physical education and recreation have a principal part to play, but others are also involved, not least those with pastoral responsibilities.

In the third year upwards of 160 pupils (about 80 per cent of the year group) spend five days at youth hostels with their teachers in the Lake District. By agreement, the whole of the special grant made by the authority is spent on this course, so that all other expeditions are entirely self-financing. Fund raising and the provision of support to individuals whenever possible are essential aspects of the enterprise. Virtually all first and second year pupils enjoy a number of day visits and learn the skills of observation and recording in the field. Approximately half the fourth year pursue environmental studies for a period of three days at a youth hostel in Borrowdale. Subsequently, geographers and biologists in the fifth, sixth and seventh years are provided with residential courses (invariably self-catering) relating to their studies. Most of these activities are the designated responsibility of a member of staff who also deals with the financial and organisational arrangements.

For the past nine years members of the fifth year have spent four days at a diocesan centre in the Lake District. Courses are planned and run jointly by the centre staff and by the three or four tutors who accompany the pupils. Afternoons of fell walking occupy the intervals between morning and evening sessions devoted to discussions concerned in a broad sense with personal relationships.

It was partly the realisation of the value of this course which led the school to seek and acquire a centre of its own where costs could be reduced to a minimum. The lease of a former village school was acquired for a modest annual rental. Unremitting work and substantial fund raising to pay for major modifications (especially the installation of an extra floor for dormitories) have resulted in the creation of an outdoor centre, accommodating a maximum of 30, of which any school might be proud. The practice is for all first year groups and most second year groups to spend whole weeks at the centre, accompanied by two members of staff (usually including the form tutor) and a volunteer sixth former. Groups look after themselves and follow var-

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ied programmes in pursuit of general aims. Various other groups use the centre for special purposes from time to time, and often at weekends. Three members of staff form a management committee and booking procedures are laid down. The school bus is an important asset and 25 teachers are authorised drivers.

High costs in terms of transport, staffing and curriculum time present a continuing challenge to resources and to goodwill but it is clear that the educational potential is so great that the widest possible support is justified.

Example 4

LEA centre serving a metropolitan district.

This centre, in Snowdonia, serves schools and youth organisations in a metropolitan district some 120 miles away. Purchased in 1950 for £4,500 the original country house and extensive grounds have been developed by adding dormitory and recreational accommodation costing over £60,000. Its value now both as an investment and as the means of access to the countryside by nearly 1,000 young people and their teachers and leaders each year is testimony to the wisdom and foresight of those who took the decision to acquire the property.

The original policy was to mount courses on the Outward Bound model and only boys attended. By the early 1960s courses were mixed but pupils were drawn in twos and threes from a number of schools and the physical challenge of the environment shaped much of the programme. Changed objectives and a greater awareness of the educational benefits of the outdoors in both personal and curriculum terms led to pupils and teachers being drawn from the same school for one and two week courses for which preparation and follow up took place in school.

Schools apply for courses well ahead and tend to choose pupils aged over 13, grouping pupils with a common educational purpose. Up to 40 pupils and the visiting staff can be accommodated in ten small dormitories. The centre has a head teacher, his deputy, five qualified teachers of outdoor education, five full-time and five part-time domestic, clerical and maintenance staff. The centre is open for 46 weeks each year.

A field study laboratory provides a working base for visiting groups and stimulating displays provide insights

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into the local environment. A fine display showing the history of slate mining in the area has been created, including a collection of artefacts and implements. A small reference library gives an opportunity for further investigation of topics arising from group studies and there are opportunities for visiting groups to develop their own displays during the course. Domestic provision is good and there are two drying rooms, one for the slow drying of equipment and one for rapid drying of clothes. Though indoor games facilities are good, there is insufficient provision of spaces for social gatherings by pupils in small groups. There is a good range of audio visual equipment as well as provision for developing film. Weather monitoring equipment including a barograph is available and a continuous weather record is kept and displayed.

Programmes of work fall into two categories, courses of the field study variety where the visiting staff know what they want to achieve and plan accordingly with the advice and support of the permanent staff; and those courses where centre staff give a lead in shaping a programme to match the aspirations and competence of the visiting group. If there has not been prior consultation with teachers the first day may include a walk designed to assess the ability of a group, to determine objectives and plan the programme. Few courses combine both field studies and outdoor pursuits as distinct objectives but concern for the environment and those in the local area is at the heart of the thinking for all courses. Centre staff are well aware of their responsibilities for conservation. For example, field groups are encouraged to sketch flowers and plants on site rather than to collect specimens.

The centre has an important function in the development of outdoor education generally within the authority. In-service courses for teachers are mounted at the centre, many from primary schools who learn the elements of party leadership in the outdoors and use of the environment in supporting their work in the classroom. Other teachers take assessment courses in mountain leadership and canoeing awards up to proficiency standard. As a means of ensuring the safety of school parties, the gaining of qualifications for national governing body awards is encouraged but the adviser for outdoor education and the centre head teacher also provide assessment of competence

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and advice for those teachers wishing to undertake the leadership of school parties in the outdoors. Visits to schools by centre staff are an important element in the process of making the wisest use of the opportunities that a course at the centre can provide.

There can be little doubt that the educational and social value of the centre to the authority's service is profound, far greater, in fact, than can be measured in straight numerical terms. For pupils whose home area contains much deprivation and unattractive surroundings the development of outdoor education is making an important contribution to education in its widest sense.

Example 5

Outdoor education through the contribution of a specialist adviser.

This LEA employs an adviser for outdoor education assisted by a teacher adviser. There are eight centres, all providing residential accommodation for students and staff. Two others are available; one is a day centre for sailing and the second provides camping facilities. The adviser also has responsibility for outdoor education in two neighbouring LEAs and the three authorities share the financial costs. All nine centres and the camp are availabl to the schools and other educational institutions in th three LEA areas. In one year there were 38,760 recorded users of the centres for day, weekend or longer periods. Two centres have a full-time warden and staff living on site, all the others have only one full-time member of staff who is the warden. Some schools have their own centre which may be a cottage or other shelter in open country. Other schools make use of organised camp sites within the county and elsewhere. Schools also use hostels of the Youth Hostel Association and other bodies.

Field studies and basic expedition work are provided at all the centres. Examination work in environmental studies is possible at four centres. The centres together provide outdoor pursuits at basic or advanced level in expedition work, rock climbing, skiing, orienteering, canoeing, sailing, pony trekking and horse riding. Courses in other subject areas such as art, archaeology, mathematics and English, which require environmental and field work, may be held at any of these centres.

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Outdoor education, in practical terms, is considered in three categories, field studies, expedition and the skills of outdoor pursuits. These approaches, separately or combined provide opportunities for the interpretation and understanding of the environment, a range of safe experiences in the environment and a sound base for progression in skills and experience. Additionally conservation is taught in theory and observed in practice.

The outdoor centre visit is directly related to school work. Once a sufficient number of teachers is competent and head teachers willing to allow experimentation, the emphasis is placed in the school. Equipment is then provided since it is considered that outdoor education can only develop if its growth is in the hands of the teachers in the schools.

The following principles are stressed:

Accompanying staff are expected to know the pupils through their contacts at school. The course is discussed with the warden, who is encouraged to visit the school for this purpose

The advisory teacher for outdoor education visits schools to offer guidance and undertake liaison with the centre

Well defined insurance and safety regulations operate

Centre wardens and staff provide training for both teachers and pupils

In-service training is regionalised and provided jointly or separately

A Federation of Outdoor Education has been formed from 15 activity associations

Schools are encouraged to operate their outdoor education programme in progressive stages. They are advised to waste as little time as possible at the centre on administrative or training which could have been done at or in the vicinity of the school. In certain instances, where schools do not have staff sufficiently qualified, it can be arranged that the resident staff at the centre can do the introductory work, but this arrangement operates only if the accompanying staff from the school undertake to use the opportunity as a preparation for themselves. Schools are also encouraged to progress to greater independence by using other resources which make more advanced demands on the pupils

Certification and validation is an entirely internal proce-

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dure in this authority and teachers are graded according to their experience, skill and leadership qualities. The authority keeps a register of teachers qualified to carry out these activities in schools and the grades are related to certificates of national currency. The in-service training programme is arranged by the LEA adviser centrally and schools are invited to arrange courses for their own staff at a centre.

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8. Safety, conservation and environmental awareness

8.1 *Safety* In all aspects of outdoor education the safety of those involved should be a prime consideration. Learning to have regard for the safety (and welfare) of oneself and others is an aspect of personal development to which outdoor education can make a notable contribution. This will be achieved partly through the teaching of procedures about the use of ropes, helmets and life-jackets, the filling-in of route cards and the carrying of first-aid and emergency supplies. Just as important, however, is an insistence on the importance of skill development and doing things the 'right' way, on self discipline and on using the proper equipment and maintaining it well.

It is obviously important that those with responsibility for school parties should be thoroughly familiar with the safety guidelines that exist. Many local authorities have prepared their own regulations and booklets of advice specific to particular areas and particular circumstances. Some of these booklets are attractively produced and represent models that other authorities could usefully copy. Two basic references are DES Safety Series No 1 *Safety in outdoor pursuits*[5] and the Schools Council's *Out and about*[6]. Both these publications appeared to be less widely available than expected.

The survey revealed a number of instances where schools were unclear not only about safety regulations, but also about whether any official policy statements by the LEA existed. Some headteachers were unsure about LEA insurance provision and there were examples of schools duplicating insurance cover already provided through the LEA. The staff of other schools were not sure about regulations concerning LEA approval for expeditions and one teacher mistakenly thought it was necessary to inform the LEA only when the journey was in excess of 40 miles from the school. Most schools had good contact with parents and kept them well informed of programmes which involved hazardous pursuits and calculated risks. Safety

[5] *Safety in outdoor pursuits*, DES Safety Series No 1 HMSO 1972 (and subsequent revisions).
[6] *Out and about*, a teacher's guide to safety on educational visits. Schools Council. Evans/Methuen Education. 1972.

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regulations were often incorporated into booklets produced by centre staff.

Competent leadership is the most important safety factor of all, and the survey revealed a range of practices whereby competence was achieved and assessed. These varied from insistence on the possession of national technical qualifications to reliance upon each headteacher's judgment. In general, there was a proper requirement that for all potentially hazardous activities teachers and instructors should possess a qualification awarded by an appropriate national body; but anxiety was expressed that insistence on certification might exclude on technical grounds those who were well experienced and of proven competence. In many cases teachers were required to attend courses of in-service training and to undertake suitable reconnaissance before taking parties to centres, but unfortunately this was not an invariable requirement. The interests of safety and efficiency alike were best served when a local education authority had an advisory team with unambiguous responsibility for procedures and proficiency, for developing good lines of communication with all interested parties and for building up personal knowledge and continuous assessment of teacher-leaders through progressive experience and training.

Many examples of good practice were observed during the survey: the morning conference to consider the weather forecast and decide plans, the completion of route cards and the checking of equipment. With few exceptions, leaders were seen to be competent and safety conscious. Sometimes party discipline was marginally less firm that it could have been and, whilst the safety of pupils was never in doubt, chances were missed to provide appropriate leadership opportunities for pupils. Navigational and map reading problems and the choice between different courses of action could have been posed for instance.

At a moorland centre the warden gave parties a firm briefing on arrival and made a point on the first day of ensuring personally that map and compass work was of an acceptable standard. In such specialised pursuits as sailing, canoeing, rock climbing and caving, safety procedures were meticulously carried out, and the necessary small ratio of pupils to staff was achieved with the help of visit-

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ing teachers.

Improvements and developments in personal buoyancy aids, especially for canoeing, had influenced accepted policy and practice in the provision of approved life jackets. LEAs need to take account of the implications of these changes and to issue guidelines to schools about the provision of personal buoyancy aids and life jackets. There were indications that the maintenance and conditions for storage of life jackets needed to be improved in a number of cases.

8.2 *Conservation and environmental awareness*

Matters of conservation should, like safety, be considered at every stage of outdoor education. Conservation is the product of a habit of mind that needs to be continually fostered by the precept and example of the teacher. The survey revealed most encouraging evidence that conservation needs were being increasingly recognised in the practice of both field studies and outdoor pursuits.

One example of good practice is that of a party of ten year old boys going for the first time into a limestone cave. They are warmly clad, wear waterproof boots and have helmets fitted with lamps. Three adults accompany them. A short walk is taken from the road, and into the cave entrance at the side of a beck. Signs of living things are seen near the cave mouth – the nest of a small bird in a crevice, spiders' webs, lichen, one small fern at the furthest point to which significant amounts of light penetrate. The party is lined up and numbered off, one to 11, and the rules for movement are explained. Keep in touch with the one behind, they are told, make no noise, shout 'Stop!' in case of difficulty. Lamps are shone on the wall of the entrance chamber which is seen to be defaced with the initials of many visitors who have gone in a short way and seen fit to leave their mark: no comment necessary. Now lights are extinguished and the party shuffles along in single file, left hand on the belt of the one ahead, right hand on the wall. Round a corner the last vestige of light has gone and pupils cannot see their hands before their eyes. Perhaps this is what it is like to be blind. Lamps on again they walk through water which flows over wellington tops: feet are icy. Calcite features are observed, the water ebbing and flowing over patterned rock. Any stalactites have been broken off and removed by others. The structure of the

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cave becomes clear, its shape controlled by joints and bedding planes. Blind white fish are seen in the stream. Now they come to a short but strenuous crawl in a passage about 12 inches high. They squirm through mud, scraping knees and elbows. A boy 'refuses' but is encouraged, and carries on successfully. Returning, mind, body and senses equally know they have been tested. Nothing has been said overtly about safety or conservation, about the need to obey rules and put up with discomfort in silence; about the need to look, and listen and take thought: but the messages have been conveyed and will not be easily forgotten.

Conservation is a rule of conduct in centres devoted to field studies. At one particular day centre objectives were clearly stated: essentially, they were to do with the observation and understanding of the environment, with an important emphasis on care and conservation. There was no doubt that this point was brought firmly home to all visitors. Preparation was particularly thorough. No group could attend without submitting a programme in advance. This was usually devised in consultation with the centre staff. A high proportion of visiting teachers attended the preparatory course held towards the beginning of each term. All primary school visits were in a series, involving three successive visits, one in each term, autumn, spring and summer, following the seasons. Secondary visits consisted mostly of three or four consecutive days. Great care was exercised to protect the area. Numbers were limited and programmes varied. Special care was exercised at particular times, such as in the woodland in spring. Collecting was very strictly limited and all live things collected in the river were put back at the end of the day. Primary groups followed established routes and did not spread out much. Education for conservation was a fundamentally important theme. Its importance was underlined by the manifest care and thoughtfulness which attended all the activities of the centre.

Some wardens had come to identify themselves with the local community to a remarkable extent, and had established a degree of trust which permitted them to take children into potentially sensitive areas such as farmland or game coverts. The warden of a moorland centre ensured that all programmes were adjusted to respect local sensitivities. The same part of the moor was not used more

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than once a month. A dozen or more farmers were cooperative and helpful but none of them was asked to receive a group more often than once a year. In the case of vulnerable villages questionnaires were strictly forbidden and pupils worked from observation only. A maximum of 12 children was allowed to study a village and no village was visited more often than once in three months. The stretch of coast chosen for beach study had a steep approach and was not used by tourists.

More schools are at pains to provide suitable preparation and briefing for centre visits, and this usually includes stress on the need for considerate behaviour and adherence to the Country Code. But whilst wardens and the permanent staff of centres 'think conservation' as a matter of ingrained habit, visiting teachers are sometimes less aware of conservation issues than is desirable. Simple points about the avoidance of litter, the preservation of flora and the prevention of footpath erosion sometimes go by default when teachers in charge are unfamiliar with rural or wild environments. All programmes of in-service training to do with preparation for outdoor activities and field study methods should include reference to the basic principles of conservation. Conservation does not necessarily mean the avoidance of change. The consideration of changes in land use and the conflicts involved will be necessary for a full understanding (see *Environmental education: a review*[7]).

[7] *Environmental education: a review*. Department of Education and Science. HMSO 1981.

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9. Some conclusions and suggestions

9.1 *General*

There has been a continuing and increasing demand, from all types of school and college, for places in LEA short-stay residential outdoor centres and a considerable growth in the number of centres. This development in the education service during the last 20 years is all the more remarkable since generally it has been achieved in the absence of central legislation or funding. With few exceptions centres were established through individual initiative and the demand for places and patterns of educational use have more than justified such enterprise.

It is unusual to find LEA centres which are not open for some 46 weeks a year. In spite of this the majority of authorities can seldom meet the demand for places. Consequently, voluntary, commercial and private organisations have seen an expansion in the educational use of their residential outdoor centres.

Camping remains one of the simplest and most valuable ways of giving experience of communal living and it has much to offer in an educational context. Its relative cheapness recommends it as an alternative to residential provision. Properly taught, camping can help young people to live efficiently and comfortably out of doors and to develop wide interests in the natural environment.

9.2 *Management and aims*

The policy for the management of short stay residential centres in some LEAs is not always clear or coherent. The chain of responsibility for outdoor education and the operation of centres in many LEAs should be reviewed and more clearly defined.

A key factor in some authorities is the coordinating responsibility carried by an adviser for outdoor education. With specialist advice, liaison between centres and schools is likely to be more effective, centre work is more closely related to curricular needs and the role and function of centres is better understood within the schools.

The Newsom Report recommended that all pupils should be entitled to residential experience at least once during compulsory schooling, but rarely does authority provision match this. Where it is clear that only a small minority can be catered for, authorities should consider

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their priorities within the resources available.

There are encouraging signs that more wardens and staff are focusing their attention on the purpose and function of centres. Such professional reappraisal is most effective when there is consultation with head teachers and advisers.

9.3 *Staff development*

The professional development of centre staff and a career structure are of paramount importance. LEAs should try to ensure that the remoteness of centres does not exclude the warden and staff from broader discussions about the curriculum.

Some LEAs insist on teachers attending weekend courses or making preliminary visits to centres prior to taking a party of children. This practice results in better planning of the programme and leads to more effective and purposeful use of the residential experience.

More specialist outdoor pursuit centres are becoming involved in field work and associated observational study. Considerable enterprise has been shown by some wardens to develop resources for such work. Teachers increasingly use environmental experience as a starting point for art, creative writing and scientific studies and as a support for examination based work. These developments should be more generally encouraged by those responsible for in-service training programmes.

The volume of in-service training at many centres is disappointingly low. It is suggested that all centres should have an involvement in training in order to:

ensure that close curriculum links are established between the schools and the centres

determine competence in hill walking and water based activities and the skills of field observation so that teachers were able to share leadership with centre staff and to operate their own programmes in safety

provide teachers with progressive training leading to competence in more advanced skills. Such a programme might lead to awards and qualifications of national currency.

There has been a marked increase in the use of centres by parties containing young people with special needs. This increasing demand must be matched by centre staff development and must involve teachers of such pupils in

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the main stream of in-service training for outdoor education.

9.4 *Safety* Guidelines on safety should emphasise:
that safe conduct is never an 'extra' consideration, but an essential part of each activity
that each activity, however elementary, affords opportunity for the encouragement of personal responsibility
the importance of training, competence, skill and self discipline and of the correct use of equipment and good maintenance
the important role of the head teacher in determining the leadership qualities and technical competence of teachers
the need for evidence of a teacher's qualifications in outdoor pursuits as well as recognition of accumulated experience and proven practical skill.

All local authorities have insurance policies which provide cover for teachers in respect of accidents during approved activities where negligence is proved against the LEA or its employees. All centre staff should enjoy parallel personal accident cover.

There are instances where schools are unclear about safety regulations and the limitations of insurance provision.

9.5 *Conservation* The survey revealed that the importance of conservation was being increasingly recognised in both field studies and outdoor pursuits.

In field study centres, conservation is a rule of conduct and procedure. Objectives are clearly stated: essentially they are to do with the observation and the understanding of the environment with an important emphasis on its care. Outdoor pursuit centres are now developing field studies and environmental education in a positive way and this usually includes stress on the need for considerate behaviour and adherence to the Country Code.

While wardens and staff of centres 'think conservation' as part of all outdoor activities, visiting teachers are sometimes less aware of conservation issues than is desirable. In-service training for outdoor activities and field studies should include reference to the basic principles of conservation.

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9.6 *Good practice in schools*

Good practice depends on a number of factors, in particular on a clear LEA policy, well articulated aims and objectives, the support and organisation in the school and the availability of adequate resources.

The best results are achieved when the teacher is fully involved in the activities, is prepared to share the pupils' experiences and when evaluation of the effectiveness of the experiences, courses and programmes takes place.

Strength derives from the leadership of the head teacher and the professional skills of the teachers in matching objectives and achievement. There should be demanding but realistic expectations, especially with regard to social behaviour, codes of practice and responsibilities within the countryside.

9.7 *Voluntary and private sector centres*

On the whole these alternative resources offer attractive and acceptable residential facilities for school groups of both primary and secondary schools.

Resources and programmes should be negotiated in advance. This encourages preparatory work so that pupils make the best use of their time and the resources available.

More importance needs to be attached to the role of the visiting teacher and it is essential to ensure that the philosophy, organisation, safety measures and intentions of centre staff are not at variance with the objectives of the schools.

The organisations responsible for centres, camps and hostels are constantly searching for new purposes and for ways of extending their use. By improving the quality and educational content of the courses both their value and volume may be increased.

A strengthening of the staff of centres catering for younger pupils by adding someone with a background of primary/middle schools teaching, especially in environmental education, may be a first step to improve the quality of work.

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Appendix 1 Residential and day centres

The Countryside Commission report. *Groups in the countryside,* (1980)[8] identified over 2,500 residential and day centres and most were used by schools for outdoor/residential activities:

	Mainstream centres	*No of centres*
i.	Local education authorities	364
ii.	Field study centres not LEA	296
iii.	Outdoor pursuits centres not LEA	556
	Specialist centres	
iv.	Day centres run by sports organisations and clubs	459
v.	Day centres based on National Trust properties, country parks, forests	157
vi.	Conference centres	82
vii.	Other serviced accommodation and camp sites	256
viii.	Riding stables	378
	Total	2,548

Hotels, guesthouses, youth hostels, camp sites and other places used by schools for short stay residential experiences are not included.

[8] See footnote 4 on page 4

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Appendix 2 A possible checklist for good practice in outdoor education

Visits to schools, colleges and outdoor and residential centres by HM Inspectors have led to some agreement about the factors that contribute to good practice in outdoor education. This appendix draws on this experience and is intended to stimulate further discussion among those involved.

The issues are presented as a series of questions so that a review of existing policy and practice might be encouraged.

Aims and objectives

Are the LEA aims for outdoor and residential education available to schools in written form?

Does the school have a written statement of aims for outdoor education and residential experience?

Are all members of staff involved in outdoor education and residential experiences aware of these aims?

Are these aims agreed with the headteacher and senior management responsible for curricular development in the school? Are they also discussed and shared with parents, pupils, advisers and the staff of outdoor and residential centres?

Are the aims translated into achievable objectives and related to a clear and realistic policy for outdoor and residential education within the school?

Do the aims of the centre relate to the needs of schools and other institutions served by that centre?

Are there any arrangements within the LEA for aims and objectives to be reviewed from time to time?

Implementation

Are the aims of the LEA matched by provision?

Are the aims and objectives of the school realistic in view of the resources available?

Are these aims and objectives in line with the curriculum policy of the school?

Is there a teacher responsible for co-ordinating outdoor and residential education in the school?

Is there an adviser with a designated responsibility for outdoor and residential education?

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Are the heads of centres afforded sufficient status to facilitate genuine curricular consultation with the heads of schools? Are there opportunities for the teachers in schools to consult with colleagues working in the centres?

Is there co-operation with other schools to achieve some of these aims and objectives?

Are there curricular links in outdoor education between primary and secondary schools:

How is evaluation managed?

Progression

Does the LEA have a policy for the use of residential provision?

Has the school planned an outdoor education programme which offers variety and sequence?

Do the various subject departments understand their role and the contribution they can make?

Is adequate time and attention devoted to preparation and follow up?

Have the school and the centre identified criteria by which progress in the work – physical, cognitive, social and aesthetic – may be measured?

Do the school and the centre present a profile of pupil progress?

Does the centre provide courses and experiences to supplement and complement work in schools?

Do schools and centres pay regard to the development of staff?

Learning

Can the school and the centre identify what skills, knowledge, concepts and attitudes pupils may acquire through outdoor education?

Is the range and quality of experiences sufficient for pupils to achieve these expectations?

Are pupils encouraged to use their own perceptions?

What are the intended outcomes of these learning processes?

In technical competence?

In self confidence?

In independence and resourcefulness?

In self awareness?

In social and environmental awareness?

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To what extent do the school and the centre attempt to balance breadth and depth in the experiences offered?

Do experiences meet the needs of all levels of ability?

Are outdoor education programmes designed for pupils with varied degrees of intellectual, physical, sensory and emotional handicap?

Do pupils and teachers evaluate their own performance?

Communication and liaison

Do centres encourage schools to develop by involving visiting teachers, wherever possible, in the planning and execution of programmes of work?

Are the roles of visiting teachers and centre staff clearly defined?

Do teachers leading parties understand fully the requirements of the LEA?

Do teachers fully understand their legal position, particularly in respect of personal liability and insurance?

Are schools aware of the contribution which subject departments make to pupils' outdoor education?

Is there liaison between these departments?

Are their efforts co-ordinated and monitored?

Do schools make use of voluntary help, including that of parents?

Do centres foster relationships with the local inhabitants? Do they have a policy for 'giving back' to the local environment?

Resources

Has an assessment been made of what can be achieved given existing resources?

Are requests for resources supported by educational principles?

Is there a programme for improving resources?

Has the school considered safeguards to mitigate the effects of the transfer of an enthusiast to another post?

Before excursions are made to more distant locations, has consideration been given to the use of local, nearer resources?

Are the natural resources of locations used with discrimination? Is due care taken to avoid the over use of certain habitats?

When using multi interest resources, such as a lake, is

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consideration shown for other users?

Where resources are pooled or shared are there safeguards to avoid losses or damage?

Has the school given consideration to the resources and services offered by supporting agencies, including centres, camps, national parks, Youth Hostel Association, Forestry Commission, Countryside Commission, National Association for Outdoor Education, Outward Bound, Sports Council and the Council for Environmental Education?

Do outdoor education centres develop as information and interpretation centres? Are schools aware of this service and how to use it?

Has each department in the school investigated the resources for itself in the outdoor environment?

Initial training

Do colleges alert students to the outdoors as a medium for learning?

For *all* students, are colleges able to

introduce students to the concept of outdoor education?

inculcate a caring attitude to the environment and a sense of responsibility with regard to its conservation?

offer students an understanding of the range of outdoor and residential experiences?

give students some insight into the technical competence and skills of leadership which will be required for their involvement in outdoor education?

offer opportunities for self evaluation?

provide students with information concerning how they may obtain further knowledge, training and experience?

For *some* students, are colleges able to provide opportunities for the acquisition of competence in a particular sphere of activity?

In-service training

Does the school encourage the teacher to take an interest in experiental learning out of doors?

Is the young teacher attached to an experienced mentor, so that technical competence and other aspects of leadership may be acquired gradually under supervision?

Is the school an agency for staff development and in-service training? Are events such as school camps, centre

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visits, field trips and club 'meets' used to provide experiences for staff?

Are teachers given information concerning how and where (and within what time scale) they may acquire any necessary certification?

Does the LEA (perhaps through the centre) organise courses to suit different levels of experience and expertise, so that teachers can identify a training structure?

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